MORPHOSYNTACTIC EXPRESSIONS OF POSSESSION AND EXISTENCE IN SINHALA

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1. INTRODUCTION. The main goal of this short paper is the study of the morphosyntactic relation of possessive and existential in Sinhala.[1] The motivation to study and analyze these kinds of constructions is mainly that they have been considered to be locational constructions since they are strongly related, not only because they share morphosyntactic behavior, but also because they are locational in origin (Clark 1968). The foundation of this kind of study comes from Lyons (1968), who noticed that the existential function of the verb 'to be' in English could not take place without a locative or temporal complement. Therefore, he argues that, the existential construction is strongly related to the locative construction. Furthermore, he also points out that there is the same parallelism between locative and possessive constructions. The only difference is that the possessive construction varies in word order because the topic should always be an animate noun. Therefore, what we are going to pursue in this paper is to discover how locational constructions are built in Sinhala and how are they related.

Interestingly, Sinhala shows the two kinds of possessive constructions that are found in the world's languages. That is, this language has possessive noun phrases and possessive clauses. However, these constructions do not behave similarly for the following reasons:

a) Possessive NPs only occur with a genitive morpheme that attaches to a personal pronoun or to a noun.

b) Possessive clauses utilize two different lexical verbs predicate: tiyenəwa 'exist' and innəwa 'exist'. The use of one or the other verb is determined by the animacy of the possessed noun. However, whenever the negative morpheme nææ is incorporated into the possessive clause, not only is the verb no longer required, but the animacy distinction is also neutralized.

c) The morphosyntactic characteristics expressed on possessive clauses (see b) are relevant as well in existential clauses because they behave similarly.

d) It is noteworthy to say that what triggers the selection of the verb is semantically the animacy but grammatically is the Copula-S argument. Therefore, it is evident that possessive and existential constructions are closely related semantically and morphosyntactically.

Lyon (1968) was the first person who notices the similarity of locational constructions. Then Clark (1978) found the same behavior of these constructions in many languages in the world. Nevertheless, what makes Sinhala a very interesting language with respect to this issue is that this language uses two different verbs in locational constructions, based on the animacy of the object or thing being located in the clause. It is this general behavior of locational constructions based on animacy that is the focus of this short paper.

The organization of this paper is as follow: First, we present the behavior of possessive noun phrases and possessive clauses so as to show that possessors in possessive NPs take the

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genitive/locative –*ge*, while in possessive clauses, the possessor takes the dative/locative -*ṭə*. Second, we focus our attention on the existential construction to show that it has the same structure as a possessive clause. Third, we discuss the negation construction of locationals so as to show that even in this case, locational constructions behave alike since the predicate (*tiyenəwa* or *innəwa*) is neutralized. Finally, we present our conclusion, which is that study of the Sinhala locational constructions allow for the expansion of typological knowledge of these kinds of clauses.

2. POSSESSIVES.

2.1. POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS AND NPS. Sinhala does not have special possessive pronoun forms since all of the possessives are built through the use of the personal pronoun root plus a genitive suffix.

PERSONAL PRONOUNS		POSSESSIVE PRONOUN	
1	*maa*[2]	1-GEN	*ma-gee*
2	*oyaa*	2-GEN	*oyaa-ge*
3M	*ohu*	3M-GEN	*ohu-ge*
3F	*æyə*	3F-GEN	*æyə-ge*
3A	*uu*	3A-GEN	*u-gee*
1PL	*api*	1PL-GEN	*ap-ee*
2PL	*oogollo*	2PL-GEN	*oogollaŋ-ge*
3PL	*eegollo*	3PL-GEN	*eegollaŋ-ge*

Paying attention to the possessive forms, we can see that the genitive suffix has three forms when it is added to the personal pronoun to make possessive pronoun forms. They are: -*ge*, -*gee*, and -*ee*. Each allomorph is restricted by syllable structure since it is realized as -*gee* only when the personal pronoun root has a monosyllabic open syllable form (see 1-GEN and 3A-GEN). On the other hand, -*ee* takes place when the root of the personal pronoun has a closed monosyllabic form, i.e. when it ends in a consonant (see 1PL-GEN). Finally, we have -*ge* when the root of the personal pronoun has more than one syllable as can be seen from the paradigm above. A summary of the behavior of the genitive with personal pronouns is shown in figure 1 below.

PERSONAL PRONOUN STEM	GENITIVE FORM
Monosyllabic open syllable	-*gee*
Monosyllabic close syllable	-*ee*
More than one syllable	-*ge*

Figure 1. Genitive form allomorphs with personal pronouns

The genitive suffix is very productive as it is used to make possessive noun phrases as well. As is generally accepted, possessive noun phrases are all of those that contain a possessor and a possessed. The possessor could be a pronoun or a noun as is showed in (1)-(6).

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[2] In Sinhala first personal pronoun has three allomorphs. They are: Maa, maŋ, and mamə. Generally speaking the allomorph *mamə* is the one that is most used in this language. However, when the genitive suffix is added *mamə* is not use for the speakers but *maa*.

(1) ma-gee   amma   ma-gee   bat
     1-GEN   mother   1-GEN   rice
     'my mother'   'my rice'

(2) oyaa-ge   amma   oyaa-ge   bat
     2-GEN   mother   2-GEN   rice
     'your mother'   'your rice'

(3) ap-ee   amma   ap-ee   bat
     1PL-GEN   mother   1PL-GEN   rice
     'our mother'   'our rice'

(4) Mary-ge   mahatteyə
     Mary-GEN   husband
     'Mary's husband'

(5) gæænu   laməya-ge   sapattu
     girl   child-GEN   shoes
     'the girl's shoes'

(6) Nimal-ge   gedərə
     Nimal-GEN house
     'Nimal's house'

Our examples above demonstrate that in Sinhala there is no difference between a possessor expressed by a lexical noun phrase and one expressed by a pronominal noun phrase. Both of them behave alike because they take the same genitive suffix to indicate possession. Consequently, grammatically there is no strong distinction between a pronoun and a lexical noun in a possessive noun phrase. In addition to this, it is also possible in Sinhala to include a genitive noun phrase in a clause to overtly mark a possessive relationship, as it is show in example (7)-(12).

(7) [ma-gee   taatta]NP   [dustərə kenek]NP
     1-GEN   father   doctor person
     'My father is a doctor.'

(8) [ma-gee   balla]NP   [lediŋ]NP
     1-GEN   dog   sick
     'My dog is sick.'

(9) [meekə]NP   [ma-gee   potə]NP
     this   1-GEN   book
     'This is my book.'

(10) [ma-gee   taatta]NP   pænn-a
     1-GEN   father   jump-PST
     'My father jumped.'

(11) [oya-gee   baba]NP   hinaawun-a
     2-GEN   baby   smile-PST
     'Your baby smiled.'

(12) [ohu-gee   assəya]NP   diuw-a
     3M-GEN   horse   ran-PST
     'His horse ran.'

Possessive clauses with existential verbs behave totally differently. As we will discuss below.

2.2. Possessive Clauses. Possessive clauses in Sinhala are built through the use of two existential verbs. This kind of construction not only behaves totally differently from possessive NPs, but it is also very interesting for the following reasons:

a) The possessor does not take the genitive suffix *–ge* as is required in possessive NPs. Instead, it takes the dative case marker *-ṭə.*
b) There are two existential verbs. They are: *tiyenəwa* and *innəwa.* The use of *tiyenəwa* or *innəwa* is determined by the animacy of the possessed. If the possessed is inanimate, the verb *tiyenəwa* is used; if the possessed is animate, the verb *innəwa* is used. Examples (13)-(17) show the use of *tiyenəwa.*

(13) [laməya-ṭə]_{NP}   [sellaŋbaduw-ak]_{NP}   tiye-nəwa
      child-DAT   play.thing-IND   exist-IMPF
      'The child has a toy.'

(14) [miniha-ṭə]_{NP}   [pihiy-ak]_{NP}   tiye-nəwa
      man-DAT   knife-IND   exist-IMPF
      'The man has a knife.'

(15) [ohu-ṭə]_{NP}   [gey-ak]_{NP}   tiye-nəwa
      3M-DAT   house-IND   exist-IMPF
      'He has a house.'

(16) [æyə-ṭə]_{NP}   [hungak salli]_{NP}   tibun-a
      3F-DAT   much money   exist-PST
      'She had a great deal of money.'

(17) [ma-ṭə]   Salli   tiye-nəwa
      1-DAT   money   exist-IMPF
      'I have money.'   (Gair and Paolillo 1997:66)

As we can learn from the data above, the possessive relation for inanimate possessed entities is indicated with the lexical verb *tiyenəwa* 'exist'. The following data (examples 18-23) show that with animate possessed entities, we have *innəwa* 'exist' as a lexical verb predicate, instead.

(18) [æyə-ṭə]_{NP}   [muv-ek]_{NP}   in-nəwa
      3F-DAT   deer-IND   exist-IMPF
      'She has a deer.'

(19) [laməya-ṭə]_{NP} [amm-ek]_{NP}   in- nəwa
      child-DAT   mother-IND   exist-IMPF
      'The child has a mother.'

(20) [muvaam-ṭə]_{NP}   [patiy-ek]_{NP}   in-nəwa
      deer-DAT   baby-IND   exist-IMPF
      'The deer has a baby.'

(21) [ma-ṭə]_{NP}   [puttu]_{NP}   innə-way
      1-DAT   son-PL   exist-QUOT
      'I have sons.'   (Gair and Paolillo 1997:66)

(22) [laməya-ṭə]_{NP} [ball-ek]_{NP}   hitiy-a
      child-DAT   dog-IND   exist-PST
      'The child had a dog.'
(23) [mahadænəmutta-ṭə]_{NP}   [gooləyo pas-denek-ut]_{NP}   hitiy-a
      mahadⱭn«mutta-DAT   follower.PL five-people-also   exist-PST
      'MahadⱭn«mutta also had five followers.'

From these examples, we learn that Sinhala uses two existential verbs for possessive constructions. In addition, it is very clear that in this language the form *tiyenəwa* 'exist' is used when the possessed is inanimate, whereas if it is animate, speakers use the form *innəwa* 'exist' as a lexical verb predicate. Therefore, it is noteworthy that the verb agrees in animacy with the unmarked NP. That is, with the possessed NP since both of them show a semantic correlation. Therefore we can argue that in possessive clause construction with existential verbs, there is the following relationship:

<div align="center">Inanimate possessed ⟷↔Inanimate verb</div>

<div align="center">Animate possessed ⟷↔Animate Verb</div>

Looking at the structure of both kinds of possessive clauses (animate and inanimate) we can see that even though the possessor takes the dative/locative suffix *-ṭə*, it is actually working as an argument NP, the reason for what it has the dative/locative suffix is that it is actually indicating a locative relationship. Therefore, the noun that takes this suffix is also an argument of the clause. Consequently, *tiyenəwa* and *innəwa* require two arguments in possessive constructions. In addition, what is interesting is that the possessor always refers to an entity that is animate because if the possessor is inanimated, it takes the genitive case marker *–ge* and automatically turns to an existential construction rather than a possessive construction. Therefore, we can say that possessive clause construction support Carmen's finding (2005) in the sense that only NP's with animate referents can take the dative case marker. So, this kind of construction has the following basic syntactic structure shown in figure two below.

Possessor + -*ṭə*	Possessed	Predicate
Noun or pronoun	Noun	*tiyenəwa* or *innəwa*

<div align="center">Figure 2. Syntactic structure of possessive clause with *tiyenəwa* and *innəwa*</div>

Gair and Paolillo (1997), points out that the genitive suffix *–ge* is actually a genitive/locative since it is used as a locative suffix as well. As we just demonstrated above, the dative case marker *-ṭə* works in a similar fashion since it also functions as a locative suffix when indicating possession. Therefore, we believe that the noun with the *-ṭə* marked is actually acting as possessor. Nevertheless, the possessor NP has a locative property, which is intriguing since Lyons (1968) and Clark (1978) point out that possessive, existential and locative constructions are not only strongly related but are also locative in origin. Therefore, it would be of interest to see if this claim applies into the Sinhala locational constructions as well. If it is the case, then, we should expect that existential and locative construction would have not only behavior similar to possessive clauses but also the same verb distinction along animacy lines. That is, the use of *tiyenəwa* or *innəwa* should be determined by the animacy of the located NP.

In order to see if it is the case in Sinhala, we begin with a discussion of existential constructions.

3. Eɴɪsᴛᴇɴᴛɪᴀʟ Cᴏɴsᴛʀᴜᴄᴛɪᴏɴ. Existential constructions follow a similar pattern to that observed in possessive constructions, since the locative goes before the subject. The main difference is that in this case, the language uses the genitive/locative suffix –*ge* as is in (24)-(27).

(24)   [pingaan-e]_NP   [pihiy-ak]_NP   tiye-nəwa
      plate-ɢᴇɴ/ʟᴏᴄ   knife-ɪɴᴅ   exist-ɪᴍᴘꜰ
      'There is a knife on the plate.'

(25)   [vaaldiy-e]_NP   [kaasiy-ak]_NP   tiye-nəwa
      pail-ɢᴇɴ/ʟᴏᴄ   coin-ɪɴᴅ   exist-ɪᴍᴘꜰ
      'There is a coin in the pail.'

(26)   [vattur-e]_NP   [maaluv-ek]_NP in-nəwa
      water-ɢᴇɴ/ʟᴏᴄ   fish-ɪɴᴅ   exist-ɪᴍᴘꜰ
      'There is a fish in the water.'

(27)   [gaal-e]_NP   [harək-ak]_NP   in-nəwa
      pen-ɢᴇɴ/ʟᴏᴄ   cow-ɪɴᴅ   exist-ɪᴍᴘꜰ
      'There is a cow in the pen.'

Examples 24-27 above suggest that existential constructions have much in common with possessive constructions. The only main difference is that the latter uses the dative case marker -*ṭə*, while the former use the genetive/locative marker –*ge* (expressed as –*e*). In spite of this difference, the selection of *tiyenəwa* and *innəwa* as a lexical verb in existential constructions depend on the animacy of the referent whose existence is referred to in the sentence. Therefore, there is no doubt that existentials use a structure parallel to the structure of possessives. This structure is of the form shown in figure three below.

Nominal-ɢᴇɴ/ʟᴏᴄ	Nominal	Predicate
Noun + -*e*	Noun	*tiyenəwa* and *innəwa*

Table 3. Syntactic structure of existential clauses

Even though, existentials can be related to possessives, Lyons (1968) and Clark (1978) both point out that existential constructions have a very strong relationship to locative constructions since they always requires locative complementation, giving them a locative function. Both of these authors emphasize that what distinguishes existentials from locatives; is mainly the word order of the subject (S) and the Locative (LOC) in both kind of sentences. According to my data clauses 24-27 above can also be order in the way below:

(24a)   [pihiy-ak]_NP [piŋgaan-e]_NP   tiye-nəwa
       knife-ɪɴᴅ   plate-ɢᴇɴ/ʟᴏᴄ   exist-ɪᴍᴘꜰ
       'A knife is on the plate.'

(25a)   [kaasiy-ak]_NP   [vaaldiy-e]_NP   tiye-nəwa
       coin-ɪɴᴅ   pail-ɢᴇɴ/ʟᴏᴄ   exist-ɪᴍᴘꜰ
       'A coin is in the pail.'

(26a)   [maaluv-ek]_{NP} [vattur-e]_{NP}   in-nəwa
        fish-IND   water-GEN/LOC   exist-IMPF
        'A fish is in the water.'

(27a)   [harək-ak]_{NP}   [gaal-e]_{NP}   in-nəwa
        cow-IND   pen-GEN/LOC   exist-IMPF
        'A cow is in the pen.'

In each one of the examples above, the S has moved to the most left position. So, if we follow Lyons (1968) and Clark's (1978) statement, those clauses should be interpreted as locative constructions since the S precedes the location. However, another alternative analysis would be to take both constructions as two instantiation of a single existential construction. They use the same verbs, and Sinhala has a flexible word order permitting the permutations. Therefore, this alternation is allowed in the language. The two realizations of the same existential construction can then be seen as resulting from the information structure in the clause. That is, if the S is new information, it becomes the focus in the clause and it is posted close to the verb, while the topic (the locative NP) goes before the S (examples 24-27). When the S is the topical or known information and the locative NP is the focus or new information, the S is posted clause-initially and the locative NP gets close to the verb. (examples 24a-27a). In essence the word order clarifies the topic-focus pattern of the information of the clause. These alternations can be summarized as in figure three below.

Topic/Known Info	Focus/New Info	Predicate
Nominal-GEN/LOC	S	*tiyenəwa* and *innəwa*
S	Nominal-GEN/LOC	*tiyenəwa* and *innəwa*

Figure 3. Word order alternation in existential clauses

As with possessive constructional, animacy is clearly the key parameter motivating the choice of the two copular verbs. Nevertheless, if we take a look at the syntactic role, we can see the picture below:

Possessive clauses: Copula-Complement   Copula-S   Verb
                           NP-DAT

Existential clauses: Copula-Complement   Copula-S   Verb
                           NP-LOC

There is no doubt that both of the clauses are copular constructions since they have the same syntactic structure. The possessed argument in a possessive clause and the located argument in an existential is the copular subject, which form a coherent grammatical class as they are all in the nominative case and they also share the property of determining which of the copular verbs to use. On the other hand, the copula-complement is in the dative case when it is related to the possessor because any time it is related to the location, it takes the GEN/LOC.

Negative constructions confirm the relationship among locational constructions because whenever the negative morpheme *nææ* is incorporated in any of the two kinds of clauses, not only is the verb no longer required by the predicate but the animate distinction is also neutralized.

4. NEGATION IN LOCATIONAL CONSTRUCTIONS. As is common in many languages (Clark 1978), locational constructions (possessive and existential in this case) can also be negated. In Sinhala, the negation of such clauses is very interesting for the following reasons:

a) When the negative morpheme *næ͞æ* is used in a locational clause, *tiyenəwa* and *innəwa* is no longer required for the clause. Therefore, the two kinds of lexical verbs simply do not appear in this context.

b) Since the clause does not take any existential verb, the distinction between animate and inanimate is neutralized by the negation.

(28) Mǽæri-ṭə   maaluv-ek   næ͞æ
      Mary-DAT   fish-IND   NEG
      'Mary does not have a fish.'

(29) æyə-ṭə   hænd-ak   næ͞æ
      3F-DAT   spoon-IND   NEG
      'She does not have a spoon.'

(30) Daruwa-ṭə   amma   næ͞æ
      child-DAT   mother   NEG
      'The child did not have mother.'   (Gair and Paolillo 1997:62)

(31) Vatur-e   maaluv-ek   næ͞æ
      water-GEN   fish-IND   NEG
      'There is no fish in the water.'

(32) Koop-e   hænd-ak   næ͞æ
      cup-GEN   spoon-IND   NEG
      'There is no spoon in the cup.'

(33) Maaluv-ek   vatur-e   næ͞æ
      fish-IND   water-GEN   NEG
      'The fish is not in the water.'

(34) Hænd-ak   koop-e   næ͞æ
      spoon-IND   cup-GEN   NEG
      'The spoon is not in the cup.'

As is shown above, *næ͞æ* shows up only at the end of the clause just as verbs typically do. Therefore, in this particular case, the semantic meaning of *næ͞æ* is something like 'does not exist'. (that is, X does not exist in Y). Although, *næ͞æ* has verbal properties,[3] it is actually not a verb but a quasi-verb since it cannot be inflected for case or for tense (Gair 1970:38). Nevertheless, for the current study, what is of interest is that this morpheme is working as the predicate of the negative locational clause.

5. CONCLUSION. Sinhala has possessive noun phrases and possessive clauses. However, these constructions do not behave completely alike. Possessive noun phrases always take the genitive suffix *–ge*, while possessive clauses are constructed by two existential verbs: *tiyenəwa* or *inn͞æwa.* However, these verbs are restricted semantically since speakers use *tiyenəwa* when the possessed is inanimate and *innəwa* when the possessed is animate. Nevertheless,

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[3] It has inflectional possibilities, such as *nætte* 'emphatic', *nætot* 'conditional, and *nætat* 'concessive'.

grammatically speaking what triggers the selection of the verb is the Copula-S. Interestingly, the same restriction is applied in existential constructions. Consequently, there is no doubt that Sinhala treats locational constructions in the same way. The negative construction of these locational clauses (possessive and existential) also confirms the relationship between them because whenever the negative quasi-verb n□□ is incorporated, the clause does not require either of the existential verbs for locational clauses (*tiyenəwa* or *innəwa*). Furthermore, the distinction between animacy is neutralized due to the fact that the animacy of the nominal does not influence the predicate. The relation of possessive and existential clause has been testified in many other languages. Nevertheless, what makes Sinhala an interesting language in this respect is the use of two different existential verbs based on the animacy of the Copula-S argument. In summary, Sinhala provides more information about the general behavior of locational constructions in the languages in the world and therefore it allows for expansion of typological characteristics of such kind of constructions.

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